

Application No. 09/762,560  
Response to Final Office Action

Customer No. 01933

**Listing of Claims:**

Claims 1-31 (Canceled).

32. (Currently Amended) A photographic print vending apparatus comprising:

media accepting means for accepting a removable recording medium having photographic image information stored thereon;

5 image information reading means for reading the image information from the recording medium;

advertisement information storing means for storing advertisement information;

10 printing means for printing the image information onto a sheet;

a housing which houses the media accepting means, the image information reading means, the printing means and the advertisement information storing means; and

15 an outlet in the housing from which the printed sheet is output;

wherein the printing means prints the advertisement information onto the sheet with the image information, when an advertisement information printing mode is set;

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wherein the printing means comprises a plurality of  
20 printers, each of which is adapted to print the image information  
on the sheet; and

wherein the print vending apparatus further comprises image  
information distribution means for distributing the image  
information read by the image information reading means to at  
25 least one of the plurality of printers in accordance with a  
predetermined standard sequence, wherein if the image information  
comprises image information to be printed on a plurality of  
sheets, a plurality of the printers are assigned to print  
respective ones of the sheets in accordance with the  
30 predetermined sequence.

33. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to  
claim 32, further comprising price option selecting means for  
selecting a price option for printing the image information;

wherein the advertisement mode is set based on the price  
option selected by a user.

34. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to  
claim 32, wherein the image information includes a plurality of  
sets of unit image information;

wherein the print vending apparatus further comprises unit  
5 image selecting means for selecting a set of unit image

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information desired by the user from the plurality of sets of the  
unit image information; and

wherein the printing means prints the selected set of the  
unit image information on the sheet together with the  
10 advertisement image stored in the advertisement image storing  
means, when the advertisement information printing mode is set.

35. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to  
claim 32, further comprising advertisement information receiving  
means for receiving advertisement information supplied from a  
remote site via a communication network;

5 wherein the advertisement information storing means stores  
the advertisement information received by the advertisement  
information receiving means.

36. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to  
claim 32, further comprising:

status detection means for detecting status of the printing  
means; and

5 notification means for notifying a remote site of the  
status detected by the status detection means.

Claim 37 (Canceled).

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38. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 32, wherein the image information includes a plurality of sets of unit image information;

wherein the print vending apparatus further comprises unit  
5 image selecting means for selecting a plurality of sets of unit image information desired by the user from the plurality of sets of the unit image information; and

wherein the image information distribution means distributes the selected unit image information sets to at least one of the  
10 plural printers in accordance with a selecting order of the sets of unit image information.

39. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 36, further comprising ejecting means for conveying a sheet on which the image information is printed by any of the plurality of printers to eject the sheet through the outlet of the case.

40. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 32, wherein the media accepting means comprises an attachment for accepting the recording medium, wherein the attachment is slanted such that an opening of the attachment is directed downward.

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41. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 32, wherein the plurality of printers comprise a plurality of sublimation thermal printers.

42. (Currently Amended) A photographic print vending apparatus comprising:

a case having an outlet;

media accepting means for accepting a removable recording  
5 medium having photographic print information stored thereon;  
print information reading means for reading the print  
information from the recording medium;

a plurality of printers, each of which is adapted to print  
at least one image on at least one sheet in accordance with the  
10 print information read from the recording medium; and

print information distribution means for distributing the  
print information read from the recording medium to at least one  
of the plurality of printers in accordance with a predetermined  
standard sequence, wherein if the print information comprises  
15 print information to be printed on a plurality of sheets, a  
plurality of the printers are assigned to print respective ones  
of the sheets in accordance with the predetermined sequence;

wherein each of the plurality of printers comprises image  
data generating means for generating image data to be printed  
20 based on the print information distributed by the print

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information distribution means, and printing means for printing the generated image data onto a sheet; and

wherein ~~the~~ each sheet with the image data printed thereon is output through the outlet of the case.

43. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 42, further comprising status detection means for detecting a status of each of the plurality of printers;

5 wherein the print information distribution means distributes the print information in accordance with detection results of the status detection means.

44. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 43, wherein the status detection means detects a remaining amount of an expendable supply in each of the printers; and

5 wherein the print information distribution means distributes the print information to printers having a detected remaining amount of the expendable supply have enough remainders for printing.

45. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 43, wherein order information is applied to each of the plural printers;

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wherein the status detection means detects a remaining  
5 amount of an expendable supply in each of the printers; and

wherein the print information distribution means distributes  
the print information to the plurality of printers in accordance  
with the order information and a detection result of the status  
detection means in order of the remaining amount of the  
10 expendable supply in each printer such that the print information  
is distributed first to one of the printers which has the lowest  
remaining amount the expendable supply.

46. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to  
claim 43, wherein the status detection means detects a remaining  
amount of an expendable supply in each of the printers, and the  
print vending apparatus further comprises:

5 print quantity designation means for designating a print  
quantity desired by a user;

remaining amount comparing means for comparing a required  
amount of the expendable supply necessary for the designated  
print quantity with the detected remaining amount of the  
10 expendable supply in each of the printers; and

warning means for warning of a print capacity shortage when  
the remaining amount comparing means determines that the  
remaining amount of the expendable supply is less than the  
required amount.

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47. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 46, wherein the print quantity designation means designates print quantity by unit amount; and

wherein the print vending apparatus further comprises  
5 designation canceling means for canceling the print quantity designation based on an output result of the remaining amount comparing means.

48. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 42, wherein the plural printers are grouped into a plurality of groups of at least one of the printers; and

wherein the print information distribution means distributes  
5 the print information to the at least one of the printers by group.

49. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 42, wherein the plurality of printers print the image data on different types of sheets;

wherein the print vending apparatus comprise sheet selecting  
5 means for selecting one of the sheet types desired by a user; and

the print information distribution means distributes the print information to the at least one of the printers based on the sheet type selected by the sheet selecting means.



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50. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 42, further comprising:

status detection means for detecting a status of each of the plurality of printers; and

5 notification means for notifying a remote site of the detected status.

51. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 50, wherein each of the plurality of printers has respective identification information; and

5 wherein the notification means notifies the remote site of the detected status together with the identification information of the corresponding printer.

52. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 42, further comprising ejecting means for conveying a sheet on which the image data is printed by any of the plurality of printers to eject the sheet through the outlet of the case.

53. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 42, wherein the plurality of printers comprise a plurality of sublimation thermal printers.

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54. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 53, wherein each of the plurality of printers comprises property storage means for storing property information relating to a thermal print head property, and the print vending apparatus  
5 comprises:

property reading means for reading the property information stored in the property storage means of each printer; and

power supply means for controlling a supply of power to the plurality of printers in accordance with the property information  
10 of each printer read by the property reading means.

Claims 55 and 56 (Canceled).

57. (Currently Amended) A print vending apparatus comprising:

a case having an outlet;

a processor; and

5 a plurality of printers connected to the processor, wherein each of the printers comprises: (i) an image former which generates image data to be printed based on print information, and (ii) a printing unit for printing the generated image data on a sheet;

10 wherein the print information is input to the processor, and the processor distributes the received print information to at

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least one of the plurality of printers in accordance with a  
predetermined ~~standard~~ sequence, wherein if the print information  
comprises print information to be printed on a plurality of  
15 sheets, a plurality of the printers are assigned to print  
respective ones of the sheets in accordance with the  
predetermined sequence;

wherein ~~the~~ each printed sheet is outputted through outlet  
of the case.

58. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to  
claim 57, wherein the processor detects status in each of the  
printers, and distributes the print information to the at least  
one of the plurality of printers in accordance with the detected  
status.

59. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to  
claim 57, wherein the plurality of printers are grouped into a  
plurality of groups of at least one printer; and

wherein the processor distributes the print information to  
the at least one printer by group.

Claim 60 (Canceled).

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61. (Currently Amended) A method of operating a print vending machine for printing image information on a sheet with at least one of a plurality of printers, said method comprising:

distributing input print information to at least one of the plurality of printers in accordance with a predetermined ~~standard~~ sequence, wherein if the print information comprises print information to be printed on a plurality of sheets, a plurality of the printers are assigned to print respective ones of the sheets in accordance with the predetermined sequence;

generating image data to be printed in the at least one printer to which the print information is distributed;

printing the generated image data on the sheet with ~~using~~ a printing mechanism in the printer which generates the image data; and

~~outputting the sheets~~ each sheet printed by the plurality of printers through an outlet of the print vending machine.

62. (Currently Amended) A photographic print vending apparatus comprising:

a case having an outlet;

accepting means for accepting a memory storing photographic print information;

photographic information reading means for reading the photographic information from the memory;

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10 a plurality of printers, each of which is adapted to print  
at least one image on at least one sheet in accordance with the  
photographic information read from the memory; and

print information distribution means for distributing the  
print information read from the memory to at least one of the  
plurality of printers in accordance with a predetermined ~~standard~~  
sequence, wherein if the print information comprises print  
15 information to be printed on a plurality of sheets, a plurality  
of the printers are assigned to print respective ones of the  
sheets in accordance with the predetermined sequence;

20 wherein each of the plurality of printers comprises image  
data generating means for generating image data to be printed  
based on the photographic image information distributed by the  
print information distribution means, and printing means for  
printing generated image data onto a sheet; and

wherein the each sheet with the image data printed thereon  
is output through the outlet of the case.

63. (Currently Amended) A print vending apparatus  
comprising:

a case having an outlet;  
an accepting unit which accepts a memory storing image  
5 information;

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an image information reader which reads the image  
information from the memory;

an information storage unit which stores second image  
information;

10 a processor connected to the image information reader and  
the information storage unit; and

a plurality of printers which print images on a sheet based  
on image data supplied from the processor;

wherein, when an information printing mode is set, the  
15 processor reads the second image information from the information  
storage unit, synthesizes the read second image information and  
the image information read by the image information reader, and  
distributes the synthesized information to the printers as image  
data in accordance with a predetermined standard sequence.

20 wherein if the image information comprises image information to  
be printed on a plurality of sheets, a plurality of the printers  
are assigned to print respective ones of the sheets in accordance  
with the predetermined sequence; and

wherein a each printed sheet is output through the outlet of  
25 the case.

64. (Currently Amended) A print vending apparatus  
comprising:

a case having an outlet;

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an accepting unit which accepts a memory storing image  
5 information;  
an image information reader which reads the image  
information from the memory;  
an advertisement information storage unit which stores  
advertisement information;  
10 a processor connected to the image information reader and  
the advertisement information storage unit; and  
a plurality of printers which print images on a sheet based  
on image data supplied from the processor;  
wherein the processor reads the advertisement information  
15 from the advertisement information storage unit, synthesizes the  
read advertisement information and the image information read by  
the image information reader, and distributes the synthesized  
information to the printers as image data in accordance with a  
predetermined ~~standard~~ sequence, wherein if the image information  
20 comprises image information to be printed on a plurality of  
sheets, a plurality of the printers are assigned to print  
respective ones of the sheets in accordance with the  
predetermined sequence; and  
wherein ~~printed sheets are~~ each printed sheet is output  
25 through the outlet of the case.

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